

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 691

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PBOR, PP

SUBJ: GPNG MAY SELL TAIWANESE VESSEL FOR REPATRIATION MONEY

REF: A. PORT MORESBY 679; B. PORT MORESBY 502

1. CAPTAIN OF CHIU FU NO. 3 SPOKE WITH OWNER IN TAIPEI BY TELEPHONE FRIDAY, JULY 18, REGARDING REPAIRS TO VESSEL. CAPTAIN ESTIMATED COST OF REPAIRS AT US\$6,000. OWNER SAID SAME REPAIRS COULD BE MADE IN TAIPEI FOR US\$3,000 AND REFUSES TO SEND MONEY FOR REPAIRS. HE ALSO APPARENTLY IS TAKING NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPATRIATION OF CREW TO TAIPEI.

2. DFRT WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE IT IF EMBASSY TAIPEI WOULD CONTACT OWNER (NAME AND PHONE NUMBER IN REF A) AND ASK HIM TO CABLE AUTHORIZATION TO SELL VESSEL "AS IS" WITH PROCEEDS TO BE USED FOR CREW REPATRIATION. AUTHORIZATION SHOULD GO TO N. DOKO, TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS "FOREIGN" PORT MORESBY. IF AUTHORIZATION RECEIVED, GOVERNMENT WILL ASK NEW GUINEA MARINE SURVEYS AND SERVICES PTY. LTD. TO SELL SHIP. IF AUTHORIZATION UNOBTAINABLE, PNG WRECK AND SALVAGE ACT ENABLES GPNG TO SELL SHIP AFTER TAKING LEGAL ACTION.

3. PROCEEDS FROM SALE PROBABLY INSUFFICIENT TO REPATRIATE TAIWANESE.

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4. ACCORDING TO LAW FIRM IN PORT MORESBY, CREW OF

SHIP CHYA CHING NO. 3 (ALSO POSSIBLY SPELLED CHAO OR CHYAU) WITH REGISTRY NO. CT0098, WAS PICKED UP BY ANOTHER TAIWANESE SHIP. THE CHYA THING NO. 3 WAS PARTIALLY STRIPPED AND LAW FIRM HERE IS ATTEMPTING TO PROTECT INTERESTS OF TAIWANESE OWNER. DFRT HAS NOT CONFIRMED THAT CREW WAS INDEED TAKEN OFF CHYA CHING NO. 3 SINCE THERE APPEAR TO BE 54 TAIWANESE ALTOGETHER NOW STRANDED IN PNG TERRITORY.

5. DFRT IS INVESTIGATING TO SEE IF CREW OF CHYA CHING NO. 3 IS STILL IN PNG AND, IF SO, PLANS TO ATTACH ANY PROCEEDS FROM SALE OF SALVAGED SHIP.

6. REGARDING CHIU FU NO. 3, WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT RESPONSIBILITY A TAIWANESE OWNER HAS TOWARD REPATRIATION OF HIS CREW UNDER TAIWAN LAW. CAN THIS OWNER SIMPLY IGNORE RESPONSIBILITY TO RETURN CREW TO TAIWAN OR DOES TAIWAN LAW PROVIDE PENALTIES IF HE DOES SO?

7. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SMALL, UNDERCAPITALIZED TAIWANESE FISHING VESSELS, OFTEN IN POOR CONDITION, ARE COMING INTO PNG WATERS IN STEADILY INCREASING NUMBERS. WOULD HOPE THAT GRC WOULD TAKE STEPS TO COPE WITH PROBLEM BEFORE IT REACHES SERIOUS PROPORTIONS.
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